be disbursed through North East Development Financial Corporation.

4. Growth Centres & IIDCs become total tax-free zones (income tax and excise) for 10 years and 15% subsidy on Plant & Machinery subject to a ceiling of Rs. 30 lakhs.

5. Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for new industrial units.

(b) to (d) The details of the New Industrial Policy for the North East have been announced by the Government on December 24, 1997. Steps have already been taken to operationalise the policy guidelines and necessary notifications have also been issued. However, in respect of certain issues where decsion has to be taken in consultation with various States Governments and/other Departments, necessary notifications would be issued shortly.

(e) While planning and development of industries within a state is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government, the Central Government has been supplementing the efforts of the North East State Governments for rapid industrialisation through special central assistance under special area programme of the North East Council and through recently announced New Industrial Policy for the North East region.

एन०आई०डी०सी० की स्ट्रैटजिक सेल

2173. श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र: क्या उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि विनिवेश/संयुक्त उद्यम के रूप में एन०आई०डी०सी० की 'स्ट्रैटजिक सेल' पर विचार किया जा रहा है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

उद्योग मंत्री (श्री सिकन्दर बख्त): (क) और (ख) सरकार ने वित्तीय एवं तकनीकी योगदान मुहैया कराने में समर्थ सहयोगी को शामिल करके एन० आई०डी०सी० को सिद्धांत रूप से संयुक्त उद्यम कंपनी में परिवर्तित करने का निर्णय ले लिया है। यह निर्णय कंपनी को मजबूत बनाने की दृष्टि से लिया गया है। इस उद्देश्य के लिए एक परामर्शदाता की नियुक्ति की गई है।

Amendment of Patents Act

2174. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have approached the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to appoint an arbitrator to gain sometime to amend its Patents Act of 1970;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the W.T.O. thereto; and

(c) the specific areas where the aforesaid Patents Act is sought to be amended?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No final decisions have yet been taken by the Government regarding amendment to the patents Act, 1970.

Proposals for Industries in NE States

2175. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal of industries/items for automatic approval for foreign equity upto 74%, from the North Eastern States have been submitted;

(b) if so, what are the proposals of each State; and

(c) what is the time for approval and by when it will be started?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Foreign Collaboration proposals that satisfy the parameters prescribed for automatic approval come under the purview of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). As per the latest guidelines, no further approval is required from RBI except that the Companies entering into such